CITY OF KIRKLAND
Department of Public Works
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800
www.kirklandwa.gov

MEMORANDUM

To: Kurt Triplett, City Manager

From: Kathy Brown, Public Works Director
David Godfrey, Transportation Manager
Jenny Gaus, Surface Water Engineering Supervisor

Date: March 9, 2016

Subject: ST3 Options and Environmental Considerations on the Cross Kirkland Corridor

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council receive a briefing covering the following items related to ST3 Options on the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC) and then review and approve a final letter to the Sound Transit Board prior to Sound Transit's expected issuance of a draft system plan on March 24. This update includes:

- A brief history of High Capacity Transit (HCT) options considered on the CKC.
- An assessment of the quality of environmental resources along the CKC.
- Potential environmental permitting processes and requirements in relation to the Critical Areas (Chapter 90 of the Kirkland Zoning Code) update.
- Current status of ST3 and draft letter for review and approval by the City Council.

The information provided in this briefing is related to the ST3 2016 Ballot Measure and ST3 project options on the CKC.

Review of the History of the CKC

In 2008, a segment of the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad now known as the Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) was purchased by the Port of Seattle. Shortly thereafter, the City of Kirkland Transportation Commission proposed, and the City Council adopted, an interest statement for how the corridor should be developed in Kirkland. Around the same time, also recognizing the importance of the ERC as a regional transportation corridor, Sound Transit purchased an easement on the ERC for high capacity transit (HCT).

Recognizing the critical need for improved north-south transportation within and through Kirkland, and the multimodal opportunities provided by the ERC, the City of Kirkland purchased a 5.7 mile segment of the ERC (with the Sound Transit easement in place) to ensure its speedy development as a pedestrian/bike corridor and to preserve opportunities for the best possible transit service in the future. Following extensive public outreach, City staff developed and City Council approved a Master Plan for the City's segment of the ERC, known as the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC). The CKC Master Plan sets forth policy and concept designs for development of a fully multimodal transportation corridor, which includes transit as an essential component.

With the CKC Master Plan in place, an interim trail was quickly designed and constructed by the City to put the corridor to immediate community use. The Interim Trail on the CKC is an amazing

new transportation corridor for pedestrians and bicyclists. It provides a healthy, non-motorized means of transportation to work, school, businesses, and parks. It also provides a place for people to recreate and for communities to come together. A large part of the CKC runs through residential neighborhoods. The Interim Trail passes through parks and by schools. Unlike many other parts of the Sound Transit system, the non-motorized pedestrian, bike, and community uses pre-exist on the CKC, and are well-loved by Kirkland's residents and businesses.

Transit on the CKC needs to be tailored to this environment. It needs to enhance – not dimish – the community connections that have been created with the Interim Trail.

ST3 Options

The CKC Master Plan included transit on the Corridor, and the City initially thought the CKC Master Plan vision would likely include light rail. Staff's perspective has changed over time, based on extensive community engagement and technical analysis. Staff is now certain that Bus Rapid Transit is the HCT mode that will best meet the transit needs of our community. The analysis that led to this conclusion began in 2015, when staff and some City Council members were informed by Sound Transit that light rail on the CKC would not likely be part of the ST3 package and that the most likely outcome for Kirkland in ST3 would be a Record of Decision for future light rail, and perhaps some preliminary concept design work.

Kirkland has embraced the region's Growth Management policies. Our population and employment forecasts along the CKC predict substantial growth, adding to already congested streets. Our Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Master Plan, and our CKC Master Plan, all included transit on the CKC as a key strategy to deal with near-term future transportation issues. Current employment and housing along the CKC is significant; this area is also targeted for future growth. Given this situation, staff turned to the option of BRT as a lower cost, nearer-term concept that could be included in ST3 at a significantly lower cost than light rail.

The Public Works Department hired a team of consultants, including Transpo, BRT Planning International, and Perteet, to evaluate the concept of BRT on the Eastside Rail Corridor. BRT Planning International has been responsible for planning BRT systems all over the world. The consultants concluded that BRT would not only work as a transportation solution, it had several significant transportation advantages over light rail:

- **Flexibility.** Buses have the flexibility to exit the dedicated guideway to pick up passengers at key areas, including downtown Kirkland, the hospitals on 116th Avenue Northeast in Bellevue, and Evergreen Hospital in Kirkland.

- **Lower Cost.** This concept seems intuitive when one looks at the infrastructure required for each mode. The consultants produced rough, order-of-magnitude cost comparisons. Interestingly, the Sound Transit template estimates show higher BRT construction costs than anywhere in the country (perhaps the world), for a basic surface busway. Additionally, the cost estimates for BRT buses in the ST estimates are double what our consultants have seen elsewhere in the country, and are significantly higher than Metro's bus costs. But even Sound Transit's higher cost estimates for BRT on the CKC are 50% less than ST's estimates for light rail on the CKC.

- **A BRT guideway could be used by Sound Transit and Metro Transit.**
    - Using the dedicated BRT guideway, Metro buses could avoid the I-405 and 520 Interchange and other congested areas, saving significant time for each route.

    - Metro ridership should significantly increase with a dedicated BRT guideway. On the Rapid Ride bus lines, which do not have all the amenities that could be brought to a BRT system on the ERC, ridership has increased by over 50% since implementation of Rapid Ride.

- **A BRT guideway could be used by private transit services**, such as the Microsoft Connector or a Google transportation system.

- **BRT can get Kirkland riders directly where they need to go.** Recent analysis of census data shows that 90 percent of people who live in Kirkland work outside of Kirkland, while 92 percent who work in Kirkland live outside of Kirkland. Dealing with commuter traffic is critical to our city. According to the consultants' research, most Kirkland transit riders are traveling to Seattle. The ability to run buses along the CKC would provide buses access to the dedicated access ramp near the South Kirkland Park and Ride, avoiding both congested streets and the congested freeway interchange.

- **BRT capital investments are more adaptable toward future transportation technologies**, with greater flexibility than light rail capital investments.

Simultaneously with the technical work, staff launched an intensive community outreach effort, letting our community know that Sound Transit had received approval from the State legislature to move forward with an ST3 ballot measure that could include HCT on the CKC. The staff team worked hard within a very tight timeframe to get public input on potential ST3 options. As a result of over 30 stakeholder outreach meetings, staff learned that, above all, our community loves the CKC as a pedestrian and bike trail. There is a tremendous fear that transit on the corridor will obliterate the trail or ruin the trail experience.

There was strong community support for a fundamental requirement that the CKC be built out to the vision of the CKC Master Plan, including the construction of pedestrian and bike trails, creation of community gathering places, and preserving/enhancing the natural environment.

More specifically, here is what staff learned from the community engagement efforts:

- **The community wants accessibility and cross-ability.** After having neighborhoods divided for so many years by the BNSF rail system, the CKC Interim Trail has acted as a unifying force in our community. Neighborhoods, long divided by railway tracks, have become unified. Our citizens are enthusiastically volunteering to work with the City to build pathways, walkways, stairways, and bridges to connect neighborhoods to the trail. People want to access, use, and traverse the trail all along the corridor. A few limited crossings at intersections and stations would not be acceptable. The fences needed to protect light rail would once again bisect communities, and will not be tolerated by our residents. As there are no fences to protect pedestrians from buses on streets, fences are not necessary with a BRT system on the CKC and the ability to traverse the CKC can be preserved.

- **Safety for Trail users.** Although both light rail and BRT options can be constructed to provide safety, the safety requirements for light rail reduce accessibility and cross-ability.

- **Minimize impacts to trees, views, habitat.** Although BRT and light rail have similar footprints, BRT can have much shorter stations. Also, busways can be more easily built to wind around sensitive areas. The catenary poles for light rail have significant visual impact and the wide aerial swath required for overhead rail catenary systems would necessitate tree removal, potentially ruining the forested parts of the CKC, particularly in the Crestwoods and Cotton Hill Park areas.

- **Minimize noise, smell, and adverse impacts to air quality.** Electric buses would be much quieter than trains, and would have near-zero emissions. They would also be far less noisy and disruptive at crossings.

- **Minimize parking impacts.** Because buses can exit the corridor to pick up and drop off passengers at high-density residential and employment areas, there should be fewer parking issues along the CKC with BRT than there would be with light rail.

- **Greatest value for investment.** Kirkland businesses and residents want their taxpayer dollars to go toward investments that provide the greatest value to our city. Based on the consultants' analysis, BRT on the CKC is the mode that would provide the greatest ridership benefits at the lowest cost.

Where are We Today?

The ST3 Ad Hoc Committee of the Kirkland City Council has met with the three Eastside members of the Sound Transit Board of Directors, as well as the Board Chair, Dow Constantine. It appears from these meetings that, in spite of the extensive community outreach and research we have done and presented to Sound Transit the ST Board members still believe that light rail is the best HCT mode for the CKC. Our compromise proposal to use "light rail with flexibility" language in the ballot measure, allowing for a final mode decision at a later date, has also been rejected.

It is our belief that the structural requirements of a light system and its appurtenances, noise from trains (particularly at crossings and stations), and the need for protected separation between pedestrians and tracks, will serve to ruin the character of the CKC, will divide the community and will forestall our ability to realize the vision of the CKC Master Plan.

The Kirkland Compromise

In the most recent meeting with the Eastside Sound Transit Board members and Board Chair Constantine, the City of Kirkland offered one final compromise that could serve the interests of both the Board and the City. The concept would be for Sound Transit to fund, in ST3, the pre-development work necessary for any future HCT system on the CKC and construction of the regional trail. This approach would set aside 250 million dollars for the following:

- To secure and prepare the Eastside Rail Corridor for future HCT from the Totem Lake Urban Center to the Wilburton Station in Bellevue, and

- To provide design money for future HCT construction to achieve a Record of Decision, and

- To construct a Regional Trail connection necessary to preserve the Eastside Rail Corridor's railbanked status under the National Trails Systems Act (16.U.S.C. 1247(d)).

Phase 2 HCT construction would be funded in subsequent Sound Transit ballot measures. Draft language for this option is included below:

From Totem Lake to the South Kirkland Park and Ride, the project would relocate and rebuild the existing Interim Trail as a permanent Regional Trail, consistent with the vision of the City of Kirkland's CKC Master Plan. A transit envelope of at least 30 feet would be reserved, primarily on the eastern portion of the Corridor, for the future HCT system. From the South Kirkland Park and Ride to Wilburton Station, the Regional Trail would be constructed in a manner consistent with King County's Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Trail Plan, while reserving sufficient space in the Eastside Rail Corridor for the future HCT system.

This project works is coupled with BRT on I-405, an inline station at NE 85th Street and transit service directly connecting Downtown Kirkland and Downtown Redmond along NE 85th Street.

Below is a brief synopsis of the major benefits of this compromise strategy:

- Connects Kirkland and Redmond to I-405 BRT and to each other with transit service.

- Provides a significant and tangible investment for Kirkland residents and Council to support.

- Constructs the final regional trail according to Kirkland's vision and in the right place, creating certainty that the trail will always be there and that it will not be displaced or diminished by transit in the future.

- Preserves the railbanked status of both the CKC and the Eastside Rail Corridor.

- Dedicates space on the Cross Kirkland Corridor and the Eastside Rail Corridor for HCT, creating certainty about the location of future transit.

- Postpones the transit mode decision to the next ballot measure and allows time for Sound Transit and the Kirkland community to determine the best mode together.

- Provides funding to design the agreed-upon HCT mode and to achieve a Record of Decision to set the stage for construction in future ST ballot measures.

- Saves Sound Transit significant money in the ST3 ballot measure by avoiding the need to fund a 750 million dollar BRT line or a 1.5 billion dollar light rail line.

Attached to this memo for City Council's review and approval is a draft letter from the City Council to the Sound Transit Board of Directors, suggesting the proposed compromise as a way to move forward collaboratively on ST3 (Attachment A). **This letter was drafted by staff based on feedback from the Council retreat. The draft has**

not yet been reviewed or approved by any Council member. Staff is seeking revisions and final approval of the letter by the full Council at the Council meeting.

Environmental Concerns

Although the City has heard from many stakeholders that they would like to see HCT on the CKC in the future, even transit supporters have raised concerns about holding Sound Transit and future HCT to the vision of the CKC Master Plan. This concern has, in at least one stakeholder group, Save Our Trail (SOT), focused on the natural environment along the Corridor. As evidenced in the CKC Master Plan, the City shares the goal preserving and enhancing the environment along the Corridor, and sees future development of the corridor as a means of achieving this goal. What follows is a high level overview. Much more work needs to be done and further updates will be provided to the Council as part of the Critical Areas Update process.

Staff have found, through technical analysis, that BRT would require less width in the Corridor than light rail. This is due, in large part, to the requirements of the catenary system needed to supply electricity to Corridor. Mode aside, there have been assertions made in public forums, that HCT cannot or should not be built along the CKC due to environmental concerns. The remainder of this memo focuses on this issue, providing information about the existing environmental conditions, potential habitat enhancement opportunities, and the environmental permitting requirements that would be required for ***any development*** work along the CKC, ***including construction of trails.***

Geographic Scope of the CKC Master Plan and HCT Options

The CKC Master Plan calls for redevelopment of the entire Corridor owned by Kirkland. The current HCT options under consideration would place HCT on the CKC between the City limits at 108th Ave in the south, and the vicinity of the intersection of NE 124th Street and 124th Avenue NE. This memo addresses environmental resources in that area. Although Totem Lake and streams and wetlands east of Totem Lake will be considered in the final buildout of the CKC Master Plan, they are not impacted by any of the HCT options and therefore are not discussed in this memo.

Overview of Environmental Resources in the CKC

The Cross Kirkland Corridor was created as a railroad corridor in the early 1900s. Construction of the railroad bed required extensive grading, placement of fill, and installation of culverts. The result of this work was an altered environment; streams were confined to ditches, culverts restricted flow, and water ponded along new embankments. In addition, clearing of the corridor provided a pathway through which invasive species could spread.

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad, the previous owner of the CKC, managed the corridor primarily for train travel. The ecology of the corridor was managed only in relation to that function. Vegetation was aggressively cleared from the area around the tracks, and ditches were regularly scraped of vegetation to promote conveyance of runoff. Herbicides and pesticides were routinely applied. As BNSF use of the corridor waned, so did their maintenance. This neglect sped the incursion of invasive species and worsened surface water issues due to siltation of ditches and culverts.

Since the City purchased the CKC in 2012, the railroad tracks have been removed, and an interim trail has been constructed. The corridor is managed for transportation to the degree that City budgets allow. Herbicide and pesticide use is reduced, for example, but concerns over the spread

of invasive species persist. Many culverts are in need of repair, and City funding for those fixes is limited. The following sections summarize the current quality of major resources in the context of the City as a whole: wetlands, streams, and trees/vegetation. Finally, an overview is presented of the type and amount of environmental mitigation that is typically provided with transportation projects.

Wetlands

There are 10 wetlands identified that are within or intersect the potential HCT portion of the CKC as noted in the Widener report (Widener & Associates, 2013). Total wetland area in the potential HCT portion of the CKC is 1.53 acres, with the largest measuring 0.54 acres, the smallest measuring 0.015 acres, and all but one being smaller than 0.14 acres. Some wetlands are associated with streams, while others are created by ponding associated with the Railroad.

Streams and Fish Usage

The CKC traverses seven drainage basins. Streams that are in the vicinity of the CKC, with one exception discussed below, have the main ecological function of providing clean cool water to Lake Washington. Streams are discussed moving from south to north along the CKC.

South of NE 68th Street, the CKC traverses 4 small drainage basins. Streams are steep channels that, with the exception of Cochran Springs and Carillon Creeks have largely been piped near their confluences with Lake Washington. Some of these channels may have historically provided fish habitat in their lower reaches, but habitat was likely minimal in the vicinity of the CKC due to steep slopes and intermittent flows. Cochran Springs Creek and the associated Yarrow Bay wetlands provide good habitat up to NE 38th Street, but culverts at NE 38th Street and at the CKC prevent further passage upstream. Current City sensitive areas maps note fish usage in this creek near the CKC, but because of significant passage barriers, "It seems likely that the coho captured had been planted in the creek" (Watershed Company, 1998). Carillon Creek has been partially restored through the Carillon Point development, but Lake Washington Boulevard is a barrier to further upstream fish passage.

The Moss Bay basin encompasses a series of small streams between NE 68th Street and approximately NE 110th Street. Everest Creek, which runs through Everest Park and downtown Kirkland, is the largest of these channels. Many of these streams, particularly in the Highlands neighborhood, are diverted along the corridor for a portion of their length, some are split into two channels by the railroad bed, and all are piped adjacent to Lake Washington with most converging in a pipe that runs beneath Central Way in downtown Kirkland. Everest Creek has the potential to support a resident trout population, but is in need of significant restoration/stabilization in the vicinity of the CKC and upstream of Everest Park to slow erosion and to restore physical habitat features.

Forbes Creek is the only basin that supports fish usage in the vicinity of the CKC. Forbes is the second largest watershed in the city, covers 16% of the area of the City, and contains the largest area of wetlands of any watershed in the city. The large wetland complex in the valley adjacent to Lake Washington is under city ownership (Kirkland Surface Water Master Plan, 2014). The area near where Forbes Creek crosses beneath the CKC is in need of habitat restoration. The culverts beneath the CKC and an associated siding are a partial barrier and a hindrance to fish passage respectively. The channel has been re-routed from its historic path to accommodate construction of the Par Mac industrial park in 1978, and because of the presence of the railroad corridor.

Channel erosion and simplification due to increased stormwater flows has degraded habitat through this area (see discussion of stormwater below). In addition, a 344-foot long 48" pipe located about 340 feet upstream of the CKC constitutes a complete fish passage barrier. The Kirkland Zoning Code (KZC 55.89) requires that redevelopment of the property containing this pipe provide or leave space for stream restoration, but there are no current redevelopment plans. An effort to daylight and restore this section of stream as part of mitigation for I-405 was unsuccessful because of the current layout of buildings and the 72" Metro sewer line that runs through the property.

Juanita is the largest drainage basin in the City and has the largest fish habitat potential as measured by existing miles of open stream channel. The potential HCT portion of the CKC passes through a small portion of the Juanita basin from approximately NE 116th Street to NE 124th Street. This area of the basin does not contain any stream channels. Water that flows along the CKC in this area is likely largely stormwater runoff that is diverted into ditches on either side of the railroadbed.

As part of the *2014 Surface Water Master Plan*, stream culverts along the CKC, as well as publicly-owned culverts throughout the city, were surveyed for their fish passage status (see Appendix E of the Surface Water Master Plan). Culverts were prioritized for addressing fish passage barriers based on factors including whether the stream is known to be fish-bearing, the amount of available upstream habitat, and the cost of addressing the barrier.

Every one of the 21 culverts along the CKC is noted as being between a hindrance and a total barrier to fish passage, with 18 being either partial or full barriers (Attachment B)-. At the same time, projects to address these barriers are a low priority relative to other culverts in the City because they are largely on non-fish-bearing streams, and because there is lack of habitat upstream of the culverts. Of the CKC culverts, the one that takes Forbes Creek beneath a spur of the CKC is the highest priority (Culvert FO-7 in Appendix E of the 2014 Surface Water Master Plan), but this still only ranks as a 2 on a scale of 4 (1 being the highest priority) because it is a partial barrier, as opposed to a full barrier, and because of the presence the complete pipe barrier a short distance upstream.

Citywide, 65 publicly-owned culverts provided better conditions, with 15 being completely passable. Projects to address the 6 highest priority passage barriers are being incorporated into Kirkland's Capital Improvement Plan.

Trees and Vegetation

An inventory of trees within the CKC has not yet been completed. In general, the area around the interim trail has historically been kept free of trees. Cottonwood, alder, and other short-lived species may dominate the area immediately adjacent to the tracks, while longer-lived trees are likely more prevalent near the edges of the corridor. Pruning and removal of trees for risk reduction is the main forest management activity in the CKC at this time.

As noted in an investigation and wetland delineation report conducted in 2013 (Widener & Associates, 2013), "As the project area is primarily located within railroad track right-of-way (ROW) the predominant vegetation is roadside grasses and shrubs including species such as creeping buttercup (Ranunculus repens), salmonberry (Rubus spectabilis), garden bir'd-foo-trefoil (Lotus corniculatus), common velvetgrass (Holcus lanatus), subarctic lay-ferm (Athyrium filix-

femina) and horsetail. Forested areas include black cottonwood (Populus balsamifera), red alder (Alnus rubra), Douglas-fir (Psuedotsuga mensiesii), and big-leaf maple (Acer macrophyllum)."

A wide range of invasive species have been mapped in the CKC (Attachment C). As noted previously, the CKC has for many years been kept clear of trees for the purposes of transit (trains or a bike/pedestrian trail), which has created a clear pathway for the spread of invasive species.

Stormwater Management

Stormwater is one of the largest sources of pollution to Puget Sound. In addition, the altered flow patterns of stormwater runoff have degraded physical habitat in our streams. Kirkland has regulations requiring new development and redevelopment sites to provide flow control and water quality treatment of stormwater. However, the majority of stormwater runoff in the city comes from existing development, and receives little treatment or flow control before it enters local streams or Lake Washington. Retrofit of treatment and flow control to serve existing development is a priority in the 2014 Surface Water Master Plan. Because of topography, the CKC intercepts much of this runoff, which generally travels from east to west through the city. The corridor presents an opportunity to provide water quality treatment of this runoff. Treatment facilities to serve 3 locations along the CKC were designed as part of a recent Department of Ecology grant project.

HCT and/or permanent trail development would result in creation of impervious surface in the CKC. Treatment and flow control would need to be provided for runoff from these surfaces according to City standards in place at the time the corridor is developed.

Environmental Mitigation Associated with HCT and/or Trail Development

The City is in the process of updating the critical areas regulations found in the Kirkland Zoning Code to comply with GMA requirements to use Best Available Science (BAS) to manage our natural resources. State guidance on BAS has evolved significantly since the City's last update so the changes required are fairly significant. At this point, the Planning Commission has held two study sessions to provide guidance on wetland and stream classification systems and potential buffers from those critical areas. Staff anticipates the Planning Commission recommendation to Council sometime in the summer if the process goes smoothly.

While it is premature to speculate on all of the detailed rules that would apply to the buildout of the CKC Master Plan, the basic regulatory concepts for city, state, and federal jurisdictions are similar for any type of public or private development that impacts streams and wetlands. That concept is known as mitigation sequencing. In summary, mitigation sequencing consists of the following sequential steps as part of project planning and permitting:

1. **Avoid** – take appropriate and practicable steps to avoid impacts if possible

2. **Minimize** – to the extent that impacts cannot be avoided, limit the degree or magnitude of the impacts by using appropriate technology or taking steps to avoid or reduce impacts

3. **Restore** – after avoidance and minimization, if impacts remain, repair, rehabilitate, or restore the affected environment

4. **Compensate** – if restoration is not possible or incomplete, replace, enhance, or provide substitute resources

A couple examples of mitigation sequencing are illustrated in the following chart using questions and criteria that might be included in an agency's review.

	I-405 Nickle Project	**Single Family Home**
Avoid	Can impacts be avoided? • No – a project to add new lanes in will have impact. *Proceed to next steps.*	Can impacts be avoided? • No – site is severely encumbered by wetland and buffers. . *Proceed to next steps.* • Yes – site has space outside of wetland and buffer to locate reasonably size home. *No need to proceed to top here.*
Minimize	Are there way to configure lanes to minimize the footprint? Can a bridge or fish passable culvert be used?	Can the home be sited further from the wetland? Can the footprint change to reduce the impact?
Restore	Revegetate disturbed areas	Revegetate disturbed areas
Compensate	Rehabilitate degraded wetlands and/or create new wetlands on site or off site[1]	Rehabilitate degraded wetlands and/or create new wetlands on site or off site at prescribed ratio

Note the examples above presume there is an applicant proposing a specific project at a specific location. The decision to build is typically made prior to the permit application. For example, the decision to build lanes on I-405 was made by the WSDOT and voters, and mitigation sequencing was applied to that project. Similarly, an owner of a vacant lot has decided to build a home on that lot. Impact avoidance would not imply that an agency would tell WSDOT to build a freeway elsewhere or a property owner to develop a different lot.

This is an important point as community members have raised the issue of avoiding impacts to wetlands by moving the transit to I-405. The project to be evaluated is transit on the CKC. Avoiding impacts by shifting to a different right of way is the equivalent of telling WSDOT to build a freeway elsewhere or requiring the trail components of the CKC Master Plan to be placed on I-405. In addition, the City has always advocated for BRT transit on *both* the CKC and I-405. The two options serve different riders and both routes are necessary to serve both Kirkland and the region.

Due to over 100 years of development and transportation projects, high functioning streams, wetlands, and associated buffers are uncommon. As a result, even under current regulations, well designed restoration and compensation can often result in better conditions than existing, particularly for low quality wetlands. Under Department of Ecology guidance, compensation requirements for impacts can vary from a ratio of 1:1 up to 16:1 and at least five years of monitoring and maintenance is required to assure that the mitigation is successful.

[1] WSDOT purchased land around Forbes Lake to create and restore wetlands as one way of compensating for impacts

Environmental Summary

Natural resources on the CKC are significant, but in good condition and are not necessarily the highest priorities in the City for stand-alone restoration. Environmental mitigation that would accompany buildout of the CKC Master Plan would improve the quality of these resources in a shorter timeframe than City resources alone would allow.

The exact mitigation requirements and process for buildout of the CKC Master Plan are not known at this point. Update of the city critical areas regulations in Chapter 90 of the Zoning Code may provide an evaluation process and options that would result in improved environmental conditions along the CKC.

References

Brown and Caldwell/Altaterra, 2014. *Kirkland Surface Water Master Plan*. Prepared for the City of Kirkland Public Words Department. Adopted by City Council in November, 2014 and amended in November, 2015.

The Watershed Company, 1998. *Kirkland's Stream, Wetlands and Wildlife Study*. Prepared for Planning and Community Development, City of Kirkland.

Widener & Associates, 2013. *Wetland Investigation and Delineation Report for the Cross Kirkland Corridor Project Kirkland, King County, Washington*. Prepared for the City of Kirkland Public Works Department.

Cc: Eric Steward, Planning & Building Director
Paul Stewart, Planning & Building Deputy Director
Jeremy McMahan, Planning Manager – Development Services
Rob Jammerman, Development and Environmental Services Manager

March 15, 2016

Sound Transit Board
c/o Board Administrator
401 S. Jackson Street
Seattle, WA 98104-2826

Dear Sound Transit Board:

We are writing to you prior to the release of the draft system plan to emphasize the investments that need to be in the ST3 package to adequately serve Kirkland, the Eastside, and the region.

The City of Kirkland supports the intensive capital option of E-02, I-405 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). This option must include an in line transit station on I-405 at NE 85th Street (E-02c1), as well as transit service along NE 85th Street (E-02c2) that links Downtown Kirkland to I-405 and to Downtown Redmond.

In addition, Kirkland supports candidate project E-06, BRT on Eastside Rail Corridor (ERC) from Kirkland to Bellevue. Kirkland's analysis shows that BRT on the Cross Kirkland Corridor (CKC) is significantly less expensive than light rail, provides much more flexible service, including the ability to directly serve Downtown Kirkland, and can be integrated with Metro Transit service to provide much higher ridership than light rail. Just as importantly, BRT on Kirkland's segment of the ERC, known as the Cross Kirkland Corridor is the only transit mode that can adequately address the impacts of transit raised by Kirkland residents through Kirkland's extensive public outreach process. These concerns include noise, emissions, visual and environmental impacts, safety of pedestrians and cyclists, retaining the ability to traverse the CKC east-west throughout its length, and preserving the neighborhood look and feel of the CKC. Electric BRT service can mitigate the concerns of our community; light rail cannot.

On March 1, three members of our City Council met with Sound Transit Board members John Marchione, Claudia Balducci, Fred Butler and with Board Chair Dow Constantine. During that discussion, the Sound Transit Board members communicated that the Board would not support BRT on the CKC and that Kirkland should accept light rail instead.

We are disappointed with this communication from the Eastside members of Sound Transit Board and the Board Chair. No analysis of why BRT is unacceptable, or why light rail is a more effective service, has been provided to Kirkland. Nor has any information been provided as to how community concerns could be addressed by light rail. Instead, the City is simply being told that light rail is the "vision" of the region and that light rail makes the ST3 measure more likely to be approved by voters.

Kirkland does believe light rail can be an effective transit mode for parts of the region, just not along the CKC. The CKC is unique as it is the only corridor being evaluated for light rail that is not along a major arterial or highway. The railbanked status of the CKC also requires that a trail exist on the corridor, which is not the case with any other potential light rail investment. The Sound Transit staff analysis shows that light rail on the CKC would cost nearly 1.5 billion dollars and deliver only 5,000 riders per day *by 2040*. This is fewer riders than Metro Route 255 *currently* carries each day through Kirkland. Light rail on the CKC would be one of the highest cost-per-rider investments in the entire system, would irreparably harm the CKC and would make it nearly impossible to realize the CKC Master Plan vision created by our residents and adopted by the City Council. For these reasons, Kirkland cannot accept light rail on the CKC.

The wrong transit is worse than no transit on the CKC at this time. If light rail on the Cross Kirkland Corridor is included in the ST 3 package, Kirkland would have to oppose the ballot measure.

The Kirkland Compromise

However, the City of Kirkland does want to support the ST3 measure and see ST3 be passed by the voters. It is critical to the economic viability of both Kirkland and the region that more transit solutions are made available throughout the three county area. Therefore the City of Kirkland would like to suggest a compromise to the full Board to resolve this impasse. This compromise was proposed to the four Sound Transit Board members in the March 1 meeting.

The concept, modeled after the Atlanta BeltLine development strategy that was presented at the East Side Rail Corridor Summit in January, would be for Sound Transit to fund in ST3 the pre-development work necessary for any future HCT system on the CKC and connecting to Bellevue. This approach would set aside 250 million dollars for "Phase 1" and accomplish the following:

- To construct a Regional Trail connection from Sound Transit's Totem Lake terminus to Sound Transit's Wilburton Station in Bellevue along the CKC and the Eastside Rail Corridor. This trail connection is necessary to preserve the Eastside Rail Corridor's railbanked status under the National Trails Systems Act (16.U.S.C. 1247(d)).

- To prepare the Eastside Rail Corridor for future HCT from the Totem Lake Urban Center to the Wilburton Station in Bellevue by clearly defining the future transit envelope along the CKC and the ERC.

- To provide design money for future HCT along the CKC and the ERC to achieve a Record of Decision.

Phase 2 HCT construction would be funded in subsequent Sound Transit ballot measures.

Suggested system plan language for the system plan to implement this compromise is as follows:

"From Totem Lake to the South Kirkland Park and Ride, the project would relocate and rebuild the existing Interim Trail as a permanent Regional Trail, consistent with the vision of the City of Kirkland's CKC Master Plan. A transit envelope of at least 30 feet would be reserved, primarily on the eastern portion of the Corridor, for the future HCT system. From the South Kirkland Park and Ride to Wilburton Station, the Regional Trail would be constructed in a manner consistent with King County's Eastside Rail Corridor Regional Trail Plan, while reserving sufficient space in the Eastside Rail Corridor for the future HCT system.

This project works in concert with BRT on I-405, with an inline station at NE 85th Street and transit service directly connecting Downtown Kirkland and Downtown Redmond along NE 85th Street."

Below is a brief synopsis of the major benefits of this compromise strategy, which also presumes the I-405 investments (E-02c1 and E-02c2):

- Connects Kirkland and Redmond to I-405 BRT and to each other with transit service.
- Provides a significant and tangible investment for Kirkland residents and Council to support.
- Constructs the final regional trail according to Kirkland's vision and in the right place, creating certainty that the trail will always be present and that it will not be displaced or diminished by transit in the future.
- Creates a true transit alternative for active transportation that can serve thousands of people while HCT investments are on the horizon.
- Preserves the railbanked status of both the CKC and the Eastside Rail Corridor.
- Dedicates space on the Cross Kirkland Corridor and the Eastside Rail Corridor for HCT, creating certainty about the location of future transit.
- Postpones the transit mode decision to the next ballot measure and allows time for Sound Transit and the Kirkland community to determine the best mode together.
- Provides funding to design the agreed-upon HCT mode and to achieve a Record of Decision to set the stage for construction in ST4.
- Saves Sound Transit significant money in the ST3 ballot measure by avoiding the need to fund a 750 million dollar BRT line or a 1.5 billion dollar light rail line.

While the City of Kirkland continues to believe that BRT along the CKC is the best and most cost effective transit mode for Kirkland and the region, we are willing to support the ST3 package if it includes the Kirkland Compromise.

We look forward to working collaboratively with the Sound Transit Board to find a solution that all sides can support.

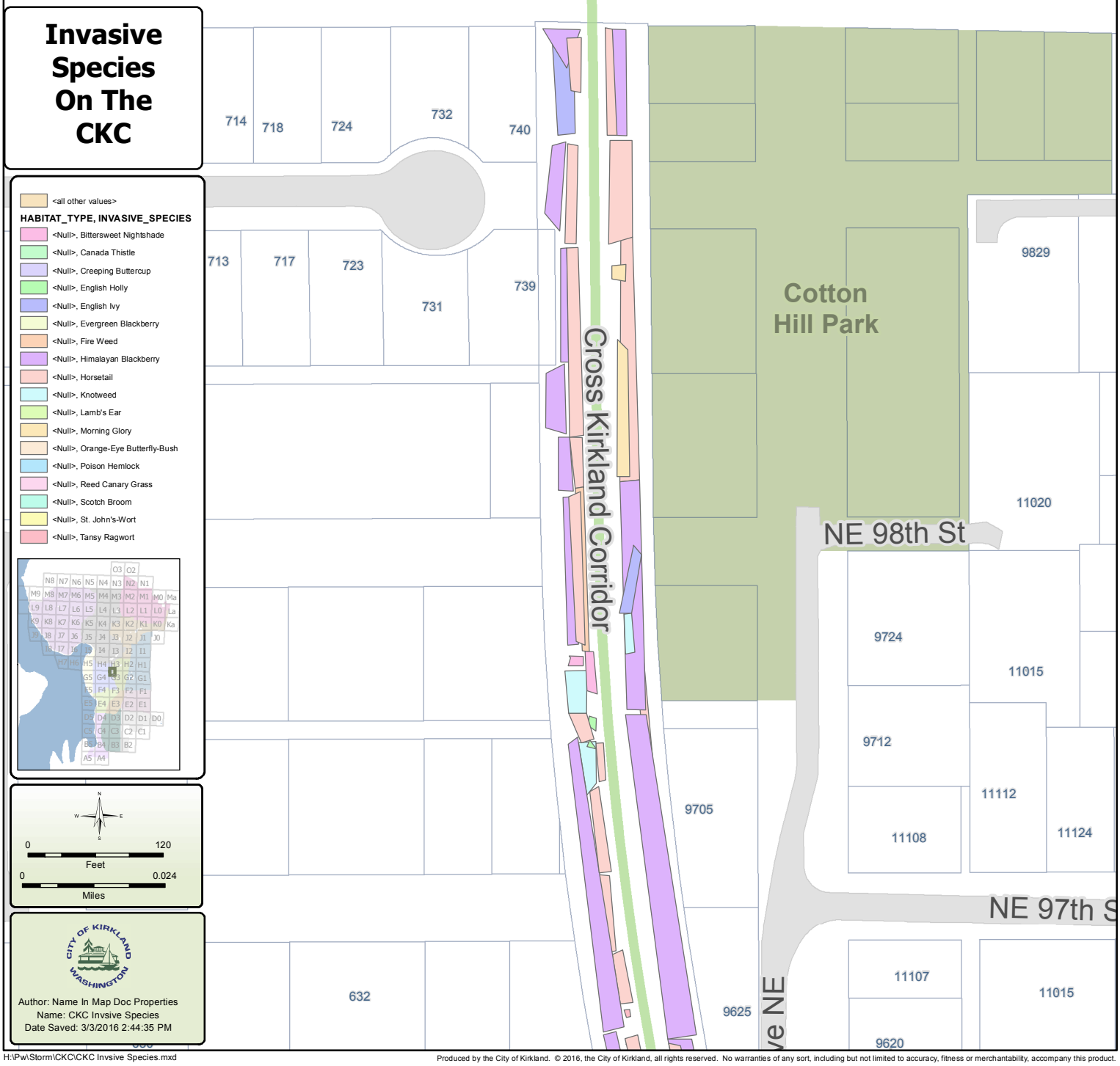
Sincerely,
Kirkland City Council

Amy Walen
Mayor

Figure 4-7 Culverts and Fish Passage

Attachment C

Invasive Species On The CKC



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- <Null>, Tansy Ragwort

0 120
Feet
0 0.024
Miles

CITY OF KIRKLAND WASHINGTON

Author: Name In Map Doc Properties
Name: CKC Invsive Species
Date Saved: 3/3/2016 2:44:35 PM

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